

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
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C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1459

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, US, DM
SUBJ: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: BENIN

REF: A. STATE 191998, B. STATE 159747, C. 76 COTONOU 410
D. 76 STATE 37591

1. BULK OF INFO CONTAINED IN REF C REMAINS ACCURATE. EMBASSY
OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENTS AS UPDATE.

2. ALTHOUGH BENIN CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN ITS TIES WITH COMMUNIST
AND RADICAL THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES (NEW LIBYAN AND CUBAN EMBASSIES
WERE ESTABLISHED IN COTONOU IN THE LAST YEAR), IT NO LONGER
SEEMS TO MANIFEST A DESIRE TO BE A VOCIFEROUS SPOKESMAN FOR THIS
GROUP. VOTING RECORDS IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND OTHER INTER-
NATIONAL FORA INDICATE THAT BENIN CONTINUES TO TAKE POSITIONS
CONTRARY TO US INTERESTS AND CRITICISM OF THE US AND OTHER
WESTERN "IMPERIALIST" POWERS REMAINS A STAPLE IN GOVERNMENT
PUBLICATIONS. EMBASSY HAS REMARKED, HOWEVER, THAT UN AMB
BOYA IS MORE RESTRAINED IN SUCH CRITICISM THAN WAS HIS PRECEC-
ESSOR, AND THAT BENINESE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA
GENERALLY REFLECT MORE POSITIVE RHETORIC ON THIRD WORLD
SOLIDARITY AND LESS ANTI-WEST INVECTIVE.

3. BENIN HAS ISOLATED ITSELF IN INTER-AFRICAN AFFAIRS WITH ITS
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UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO ORGANIZE A BOYCOTT OF THE RECENT OAU SUM-
MIT IN LIBREVILLE. BENIN'S FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN THE OAU IS
VERY MUCH IN DOUBT AS A RESULT. ALTHOUGH BENIN CONTINUES TO
RECEIVE MESSAGES AND GESTURES OF SUPPORT FROM ALGERIA, LIBYA,
GUINEA, ANGOLA, ETC., THE BOYCOTT EFFORT HAS WORKED TO THE DETRI-
MENT OF THE BENINESE LEADERSHIP IN MUCH OF AFRICA AND AT HOME.
THE ATTEMPT TO POSE BENIN AS AN INNOCENT VICTIM OF "INTERNATIONAL

IMPERIALISM" AND THE BITTER DENUNCIATIONS OF FRANCE, GABON, MOROCCO, SENEGAL, IVORY COAST, AND TOGO FOR THEIR ALLEGED COMPLICITY IN THE JAN 16 RAID ON COTONOU HAS CONSIDERABLY DIMINISHED THE ESTEEM OF THE KEREKOU REGIME WITH MODERATE AFRICANS AND IMPARTIAL OBSERVERS.

4. WHILE THE STATEMENTS IN REF C REGARDING THE RELATIVE UNIMPORTANCE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IN THE BENINESE GOVERNMENT CONTINUE TO HOLD, EMBASSY HAS NOTICED IN THE COURSE OF THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS A NEW, RELAXED ATMOSPHERE AND WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS ON THE PART OF MINISTRY OFFICIALS. SOME OF THIS NEW COOPERATION IS UNDOUBETDLY DUE TO THE NECESSITY FOR EMBASSY/MINISTRY COOPERATION IN SOLVING A RASH OF CONSULAR PROBLEMS ENGENDERED BY THE CRISIS ATMOSPHERE WHIPPED UP BY OTHER PORTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, NOTABLY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

5. EMBASSY IS HOPEFULL THAT CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES COULD COME ABOUT, NOTING THE SITUATIONS DESCRIBED IN PARAS 2 AND 4 ABOVE. BENIN PRESENTLY FACES CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS (IE..FOOD SHORTAGES, AND A GENERAL LACK OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OR ITS POLICIES), SO THAT MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS DO NOT CONSTITUTE A MAJOR GOVERNMENTAL CONCERN. IN SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE, A REASONABLE AND QUIET DIPLOMATIC DEMARCHE COULD PERHAPS TRIUMPH OVER A KNEE-JERK IDEOLOGICAL RESPONSE.
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6. EMBASSY'S MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS OFFICER IS W. KENNETH THOMPSON, CHARGE D'AFFAIRS AI.

7. OTHER EMBASSY REPORTING WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS ARE: COTONOU 1245, ECOWAS: 76 COTONOU 1018, MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTHEPN AFRICA: 76 COTONOU 887, OAU SUMMIT - MIDDLE EAST; 76 COTONOU 1404, BENINESE FOREIGN MINISTER'S SPEECH AT COLOMBO SUMMIT; 76 COTONOU 1942, SENIOR BENINESE OFFICIAL'S VIEWS MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. CREAGER

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Concepts: RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGS
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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